ΑΥΩ

That which, upon the dissolution of all things else, is not destroyed, is superior and of another nature from the visible universe: it is invisible and eternal. He who is thus called invisible and incorruptible, is even he who is called the Supreme Abode; which men having once obtained, they never more return to earth; that is my mansion.—*Bagavad-Gita.*

THE PATH.

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LETTERS ON THE TRUE.

I.

MY COMRADES:—

A renowned occultist said recently; "Do not write like the Peripatetics, but put your soul into it." The wisdom of this advice becomes at once apparent. We may not all attain those brave pinnacles in the distance, but the first hard steps lie close at hand, to be taken by every earnest man. He takes them more or less in the dark. Now our struggle is for Union; not merely to be in Union, but to be that Union itself. This idea should attend us from the outset, for ideas create men. So in considering the subject of Truth, and how to become It, I find myself confronted with my individual experience, and my conception of its value soon enlarges as I

find it repeating itself in many another life. It would seem that I might thus come to you, a friend to friends, speaking plainly of such hidden essences as I may find in diurnal things. I do not offer a universal panacea. I point out that which is for me The Way. Yet I say also with Ulysses: "I am a part of all that I have met," and to those sharers of my larger nature I manifest that which I have found. You are very present with me, oh, my Comrades! Distance cannot shut you from me. Maya cannot hide you. As we breast the tide of this Dark Age, I seem to feel your hearts beating time with mine. I meet one, and he becomes identical with me; then perhaps another and still another, until merged in the pulsation of a single Hope, we are but so many throbs in the Great Heart of All. I salute you out there in the Unknown, and may we one day come together with the large homeric joy of fellow warriors! Now you know in what spirit I address you.

Would to God Truth were more believed in! I say this amid frequent surprise. Yet it is a mimic Truth by which we live. This puppet virtue emasculates. It cozens our judgment, disowns our intuitions and divides our motives. We drift to and fro with the material scum of Being. When do we come face to face, speaking entire thoughts? We look each at the other's mask, and Truth is dumb. Shy as schoolboys we are before the tricksy illusion of form. As friends commune best in the twilight, so we shrink back within the veiled recesses of the mind, and if we speak our conviction, it is in parable. Who has a true relation in life? Between the closest lovers there arises this impalpable wall of fictitious personality. We do not break through it. The heart pants for the True, but it cannot reveal its necessities to those whose thirst is slaked at shallower streams. If we dared be what we are with one another, we might get down to bed rock, and begin to understand somewhat of this great mine called Life, and the lay of its ore veins, and where a man may blast through to everlasting riches. You will say to me; "Shall I disclose the sacred core of my soul to be gapped at and appraised as the thing for which I have paid just so much blood and so many tears?" *Never!* I know well that even those who under ties of birth and law have a right to confidence, do not always know of its existence. You sit among them in the twilight, gazing towards the horizon, striving to catch the first divine harmonies of the on-coming night, and when they say to you, "Of what are you thinking?" you answer;—"I wondered if to-morrow will bring good harvest weather." For you have tried it and found no scale to measure, no bottom to the box. It is a common need that I specify. We are delivered up at the bar of custom, impressed under arbitrary standards, bidden accept the verdict of self impanelled citizens for the swift mandate of our own soul. She mocks at this usurped authority. We have too long allowed others to bind us in

the names of the great Verities, and now we discover beneath those august mantles, plastic little gods of civic creation. It is a tale as old as the world.

It lies within our power to change this in some degree at least. He who would have true relations, must himself be true. Let him distrust names, and sift facts. Give nothing the right to pass you unchallenged. The most trifling opinion must give the eternal countersign before I admit it within my lines. I receive no idea until I have tested it by all the laws known to me, whether natural or supra-natural. For if I give out some false thought to another, I poison his spring. I have a corsican feud with that lying word—"*Independence.*" I would raze it from the memory of men. There is no such thing. The True repudiates it. Exact Science protests her ignorance of this fabled monster. Even on the physical plane, each man, himself a glowing sphere in action, throws off and inhales by every pore, particles of matter, of mind stuff, of cell stuff, of all that goes to the making of the mere flesh and blood man. Case him up in plaster of paris with but the necessary orifices for organic functions, and see how long he will live. Put him into solitary confinement and mark what becomes of his "independent" brain. We interchange bodies with one another and recruit them even from the dead. Reject me ; put the Atlantic between us, and I will send a shaft to your heart in the shape of my thought. I have seen proud men chafe at a comrade's suggestions, and accept unconsciously the alms of a thousand stranger minds. We have a tremendous lien upon one another. All Humanity impinges upon every man, at every instant, on every plane. Where among the worlds do you find Independence? Is your constitution larger than that of Orion? Shall continuity be displaced, that you may stretch yourself? Accept the reign of Law; and instead of Independence write "*Interdependence,*" on the lintel of the heart. I do not say this procedure is always painless. Truth is a goddess who demands a human sacrifice. For my part, give me facts, though they crush me. Something finer will spring up from the remains.

Being true friends we shall find them. Here in this perplexed world if hearts could get together, and together—untinged by sense—go out through one another's real experience, much might be found out. Such friends love truly because each in the other sees the true self reflected. They do not hold silence but reveal hidden thoughts, and by mutual comparison, which is greater and surer, eliminate error, realize the True in all things and "keep each other awake in Him." They hold intercourse also, at times which they do not recollect, as we do with all higher souls who love us, and who certainly exist, though not now known to our mortal eye and memory, and who drink perhaps often with us the little ambrosia that we are able to reach. For this infrequent boon doubtless all people languish, knowing not what it is that they desire, and thus many a soul goes through life seek-

ing it for years, and often, too often, concludes that it is a search for Utopia, because the rough experience of long seasons proves apparently that "friends such as we desire are dreams and fables."[1] It need not be so, if you will not have it so. Be wholly true and you must find within your circle at least one heart equal to yours, with whom you can establish this priceless interchange. Seek one another; break up the ice and get out into free air. The man of the world and the deifier of the practical, will alike bear witness that in such union is strength indeed, no matter to what issue. It can be maintained where lives have a mutual lodestar. Yet be on your guard against the intellectual tramp, who is ever ready to refresh himself in your inner domain and gape at your wonders. The curious and the idle have no right of way through my mind.

The awakening soul demands a plain and vital relation. She cries to all her environments: "Hereafter I am bound by no arrogative claims. Does your word reverberate in me? I follow! Does your thought attract mine? Take it! I will give you all that is yours in me; I will not give you one jot more. Hope not to mould me within given limits. I shape myself only to the True. I will no longer be merely virtuous. I am Virtue!" Such is the language of the soul, to whom her own Being is sufficient fact, who offers no explanations, no excuses, but faces the interlocutor boldly, and answers: "Thus have I done. Am I or am I not free?" When the eternal comparison is established, however, she bears herself humbly before it, so long as she has not herself become that Eternal in very fact. She knows that there is but one place in the universe whereon a man may make a square stand, and he does so with the Law to back him. That place is his Duty. The equation of the Past has brought him there. All these paltry concerns, this material pressure are outcomes of the energies of that Astral Medium which is at once his flux and his teacher. He and others about him are making these things themselves. He must learn why and how; for this lesson there is no better place than that wherein his soul first rouses from her stupor.

I spoke of Virtue. What is that? Emerson once told us: "Virtue is the adherence in action to the nature of things." That commanding Nature, which is the True, stands above the adherent virtue. Growth and decay advance through retrogression, the fermenting and cathartic processes, these are Nature's. She gives, not opiates, but astringents. To sin, which is to go off at a tangent from the True; to suffer, which is discordant vibration; to return when a latent attraction, developed through pain, sets out towards the sphere of harmonious action; all this is natural. To lose a thousand vintages through the evolution of finer forces, to make here a rose and there a desert, these, with many transmuting and conserving powers, Nature

1 Emerson.

offers as analogies to the student of the True and forbids him to condemn any of them. Sometimes convention establishes this natural order, simply because it is too massive to be overlooked, as when well-bred people select only topics of general interest to all. Then the crowd follow, not because it is true, but because it is convention. This cold acceptance freezes up the vitality of the germ. Let a man agree with his own soul that he will not lie because he galvanizes non-being into Being; that he will not steal because he goes behind the law which gives him all that is his own and will demand restitution at compound interest for the very word of which he may have deprived another. Let him not covet aught because his true manhood depends on his balance of power, his control of desire. Let him demand of himself the *Why*, of every impulse. Let him seek out the basic reason of his thoughts and actions, and assuring himself of his hidden motive, kill or exalt that as it may deserve. This is vital. What I say here of man applies once and for all to woman also. I am considering that fontal essence in which is no sex, no condition, no division—the True. If the whole tendency be to that, the greatest secrets in occultism can be known. Loyalty must be a sum, not a fraction. Take Truth alone for your headlight, thereby the world may see your course, and children and jejune idlers be warned from its track. I do not say you should rise up and cast off the outer life all at once. That is your protection; you will need it for some time to come. But I say that you should look sleeplessly for the true kernel of these external things. Our advance must even be made with discrimination, often in befriending silence. Remember that under the present social constitution, as long as Theosophy seems to unfit men for their private capacities and obligations, so long will the world condemn it as lacking in moral and in common sense. Its exponents may not deal violently with established relations. You are to work out, not to jump out. If we love the True, we shall fulfil every personal claim, every formal pledge incurred by our position in life, at no matter what cost, rather than allow a false deduction to be drawn which shall implicate the good faith of our moral philosophy. Those to whom we are due alone can free us. An Adept wrote recently: "To find masters, you must be unclaimed by man or woman." Unfulfilled duties are ropes which drag us back. Men are eager to serve this cause; let them bear the result of their actions for its honor until the high law sets them free. Only an overwhelming certainty of a divine mission, of a certified call to Adeptship and the service of Humanity at large frees us from these present considerations by removing us to a higher plane, wherein we stand justified. While I live among men I wear the garment appointed to their assembly. Hours befall when I am called to quit this communion for that of the gods! Then I only know the laws of the soul and emerge from these platitudes of this lower world.

We cannot too deeply inhale the knowledge that Truth is not a surface growth. How often I have seen the clue overlooked by seekers ; how often seen the messenger refused ! Perhaps the tenor of his speech was too foreign, or too unassuming ; or time was lost in questioning his methods, or the student flung away in fancied independence, forgetting that men do not own their own minds, but are debtors to the great currents of Thought. These flow through us like a river ; the individual mind is but one of a million ripples, yet the force gathers momentum from ripple to ripple and all are the river. Only a large nature can receive a gift with grace and integrity ; it has no fear of belittling itself by acceptance, for it knows that in the True we only receive in due proportion to our gifts, and that it must speedily bestow this bounty elsewhere. You do not hesitate to accept the services of a bank clerk because he is paid for them. Do you suppose that equity is confined to men, and that the Eternal gives us no retainer ? Dismiss this commercial weighing and counting ; give and take as the winds do ! If an archangel stood within a body whose exterior did not announce that divine prompter, men of average standing would reject him while searching for him. "I faint with the desire to find those who will unselfishly accept me and work for the rest. I give myself in all things for your benefit and would be glad if by my death or by my loss you could reach enlightenment. I would transfer, could I do so, all my experience to your soul and give it away to you. For what ? For nothing at all save your acceptance. You know very well we can do no more than offer these goods. We set up the wooden image before the eyes of men and not one taking the sword cuts it in two, to find the jewels within. Then we sadly go on again."[1] That is the language of spiritual power and self confidence ignores it daily. If Jesus and Buddha walked the earth to-day without followers or protestations, how many men who clamor for the mysteries would recognize Them by an innate perception of Their qualities ? I marvel that others suppose the Great Spirits of all ages to have passed onward to realms of bliss, without a second thought for the belated brotherhood behind. By the inexorable laws of Their perfected natures, some must have returned, in renunciation and bondage, to live and humbly teach and cheer reluctant men.

Do not take any man at his surface valuation or yours, but look to the spirit within his words. This discernment of spirits is a great power ; it can be cultivated. Close your eyes, summon up the man before your thought and try to *feel his total effect* as it impresses itself on your passive mind. Then regard him impersonally as a problem solved, not forgetting that a foolish man may at times become the mouthpiece of unseen powers. Our perception is often tested thus ; be vigilant, lest unawares you reject the fruit of life. But you wish to pluck it for yourself without the aid of any

1 Letter from a friend.

man? Friend! Such fruit never grew. *The One Itself can only realize through the many.* Are you higher than that?

Others again fall into the besetting error of students who are tempted at the outset to elaborate a system. The wish to set our intellectual acquisitions in order is natural enough, but as on our present plane we can only attain to partial conceptions, we may harden them into a finality, become insensibly attached to them as being our very own, and reject all that does not accord with them. Must the universal march up and toe my chalk line? Eschew mental habit; it is a great encrustor. Submit the outer and inner man to the solvent of will. Heed the indications of Nature. Observe the bird as it folds its wings and drops down the air to the predetermined spot. Consider the lightning, when from the lurid sheeted flow it forges a bolt and darts it to the mark. Every bullet that scores must first be liquid lead. Fix your motive, then make your thought fluidic and free. We are much conjured in the name of consistency. In heaven's name then, let us be consistent, but to the Truth itself, through all its varied manifestations. Each man need care only for what he is this moment, and pass on easily with life to the next. There are times when we rise into an instant perception of Truth through the total nature of the soul. Then I feel myself great, by reason of this power, yet infinitely small, in that I do not hourly contain it. The laws governing this tidal wave form part of my inner consciousness, just as many of my forces are out yonder in the infinite correlations of cosmic energy. A full perception of them enables a man to hold up hand and lure, and the hawks swoop down. When a comrade displays this touchstone of the soul we know one another without any words. Many men of positive nature think that they also have fallen heir to this power because they test and are confident. They stand fast in reality by the lower knowledge of the delusive self, and can no more apprehend this internal aurora which throbs and gleams through the expanded man than a child discriminates between Northern Lights and the glare of distant conflagrations. The reason for this, as for all mistakes, inheres deeply in the elemental nature of man, and suggestions can be given whereby he may first recognize and then if he be a strong man—conquer it. To this end let us unite our efforts, for you know it is through sharing this faulty nature that I have been led to an earnest contemplation of possible remedies.

JASPER NIEMAND, F. T. S.

Suggestions As to Primary Concepts.

(*Concluded.*)

As a man thinketh, so he is.—*Christian Scripture.*
All that we are, is the result of what we have thought.—*Buddhist Scripture.*

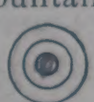
Man contains within himself the fountains of wisdom, and the keys of knowledge. He who looks outside of himself for wisdom will search in vain. The unfoldment of *understanding*, this is true wisdom. Man is ignorant, not because wisdom inhabits a deep well, but because man's understanding is so shallow. The grandest truths of nature lie open all around us; the veil of Isis is but another name for the blindness of man. "As above, so below, as on earth, so in heaven." The same law which rounds a drop of water and crystallizes a snow-flake, forms a planet and builds a mountain. There is law, and rythm, and melody, and exact proportion, in all created things. Exact geometry determines the form of all things. Every atom of matter in the universe is set to music. The parts of every complex body, whether of man or mountain are related to the whole by exact ratios, definite multiples. The proportion of every element in a compound is definitely fixed. So are the conditions for the development of every seed or germ, from monad to man. If you alter these conditions, nature gives no response, she is *silent*, and she *waits*. What to her are "time and space"? Hers is the eternal! the everlasting! the boundless! She never argues, never wrangles, never complains. The Caballa Denudata has been at last translated into English. Yet where are the ancient secrets "*laid bare.*" We shall search for them in vain. He who knew these secrets in the olden time sometimes *hid* them in books, but *revealed* them there, *never!* There are three that bear witness, the instructive tongue, the listening ear, and the faithful breast. The instructive tongue could only babble to the gaping crowd, hence it is silent. Ears have they but they hear not, was said of them of old time. In the faithful breast the demons of pride, lust, and mammon have long ceased to bear witness. Silence reigns in heaven. There was never one who *led the life*, who did not at last come to *know the doctrine.*

We have already shown that the nature of the phenomenal universe and the bodily senses are the same. Each exists by virtue of change, motion, unrest, transition, that is their *essence.* Therefore *they are, because they are not!* You can neither detain nor repeat them. Even our thoughts are of the same nature, you cannot detain, or control them. They come and go, and come again, yet never twice the same, something is added,

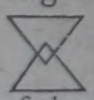
something wanting. Sum up our sensations as pleasure and pain, the two poles of feeling, each necessary to the other, each the exact complement of the other. How vainly do we strive to retain the pleasure and get rid of the pain. He who never suffers, never enjoys; he who is incapable of suffering is incapable of enjoyment. He who has suffered shall surely enjoy, measure for measure, for such is the law of life.

The first great division under the conception of the duality of all things is, on the one side, the phenomenal, the outer, visible changing universe; on the other the noumenal, the opposite; and the reason why this side of being is so little known, and so seldom even recognized, is that we live so largely in the things of sense and time, and this fact will presently make apparent the reason why we know nothing of any previous incarnation. If we recognize the duality of existence and discover that life is an equation, death becomes the great cancellation of the excess on the side of time. We have already shown that individual self-consciousness is the centre in man. The sphere of consciousness is the monad that incarnates, the nucleolus of the cell. This conscious monad stands in the center between the phenomenal and the noumenal. This is the Life of which the poet speaks,

"Between two worlds life hovers like a star,
"From morn till eve on the horizon's verge."

The language of symbolism is very expressive in this direction, and may embody in a picture the size of a halfpenny the whole science of man. Cross the palm of the hand with two pins, and he who knows how to read and unfold will give you the whole of Caballa, Connect the upper and the lower points thus and you have a double triangle, or a double mountain, literally, Mt. Sinai[1], or Mountain of Light. Next take the cell from which man's organism springs.  with its cell wall, cell contents, nucleus (and contents), nucleolus (and contents), and let the apices of the triangles meet at the border of the nucleolus, thus, Now let the lower triangle represent the three lower principles of man, those related to the phenomenal world, and the upper triangle represent the three principles related to, or drawn from the noumenal world, and let us suppose the above diagram to represent the conditions at birth, at the dawn of consciousness. We have already shown that the development of all germs is a two-fold process, from "vivification" to "birth," and from birth to death, viz: the shape and physical life *evolves*, while the essential or typical form and spiritual life *involves*, thus maintaining the equation or equilibrium. In the above diagram

1. See J. Ralston Skinner's Notes on Caballa.

the nucleolus represents the central sphere. Let the dawning of consciousness be represented by the interlacing of the triangles, thus,  The lower triangle still represents the phenomenal world, the things of time and sense, the upper triangle the noumenal; and as by evolution the lower triangle advances upward, so by involution the upper triangle advances downward, while the central space, formed by coalescence of the two, represents consciousness.

Now suppose this coalescence, approximation or interlacing continues, thus, till we have at last a complete geometrical figure, our familiar double triangle, or six-pointed star. This would involve an exact equation, evolution equal to involution, with progressive expansion of the central area of consciousness.

Our geometry fortifies our proposition still further, for if we fold each of the points of the triangles toward the center we shall form a complete hexagon, the six sides and six angles thereof representing the angles and sides of the two original triangles, thus making our symbolism complete. *The realm of consciousness has absorbed both the phenomenal, and the noumenal,* and the perfect or Divine Man stands revealed, and thus, and thus only, can man be made in the image of God. A spark of the Infinite expanding in self-consciousness till *at one* with the *All,* "as above, so below, to accomplish the purpose of *one thing*" viz.: the Anthropomorphic God, the Godlike man. Now suppose we represent the lower triangular space as dark, and the upper as light, the coalescence would then be mixed in the central area.

How then can this central space, consciousness, be illuminated? By conscience, the "voice of God" within the soul, and the result of this illumination is *righteousness.* But suppose this process of illumination—grand expansion—goes on naturally until the seventh year in the life of the child, and that from that time worldliness sets in, and the "dark world" gains the ascendency and holds it throughout life. Consciousness *i. e.*, experience, pertains almost wholly to the lower triangle, the spiritual life (noumenal) is lost sight of, ignored, and at last ridiculed and denied. "Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." Suppose that two substances naturally unite in equal proportions to form a chemical compound, and that for one pound of the one substance we place in the crucible one hundred of the other, what is the result? If there be *conditions for combining at all,* we shall find in the crucible when emptied, exactly *two pounds* of the compound, and the balance "REFUSE." How many such incarnations would it take to make man master of two worlds, twice born, a son of light. Is it any wonder we have lost our birthright, and forgotten our last incarnation? How many of the

men and women of the world have any consciousness of spiritual existence? How many declare with pride that they are materialists, *i. e.*, outcasts disinherited by their own act? How many will be born into the next world like the weak sickly wailing waifs that are born into this, who after one feeble gasp sink back into the great unknown from whence they came. How many have discerned the Gates of Gold? "He that would lose his life for *My* sake, shall surely find it."

These are but primary concepts, true or false according to him who reads. It is not enough to suppress the appetites and passions, we must "press forward to the mark of our high calling." We are not to despise or to destroy, but to transmute, and to aspire. If we but listen in silence, "sink down into the abyss" there is one who is ever ready to exalt us. Our ears have been so long accustomed to the clash and clangor of time, that we hear not the voice of the silence, or if we hear we are afraid. According to the desires of the heart, and the *fervency* thereof shall be the fruition. Strong passions, strong appetites, indicate strength of life, and if the *desire* but once seize hold of righteousness *to possess it*, and if we *persist* and are *determined*, and refuse to let it go, coy and shy as a bride at first, it will at length come like a heavenly guest to rest in our bosom.

J. D. Buck.

The Lake and the Pool.

In the midst of the great pine forests, which opened as if to reveal their secret, lay a vast lake. The frozen winds from the North beat upon it, and lashed its waves upon the Southern shore. The sun shone on it and great rifts of weeds with fallen trees floated upon it.

By its side stood two men; one old, bent with age, with long grey locks. He pointed with his hand over the stormy surface whilst the clouds hung closely down, and the long flight of wild birds that were passing over seemed in haste to escape. Listening to him was a young man, lame and slight of build, but giving intensest heed to what the old man said:

"Drain the waters of this lake, to clear away these waves and make firm land—that is your task."

"But," replied the young man, "I am single handed and the lake is vast. Each of its waves is as tall as I am. How shall I chase back its waters?"

The old man said nothing, but led him into the forests again and they passed between the bare pine stems, with here and there a sharp, jagged, broken branch jutting out, till they came to where the rocks sprang out of

the earth and trees were fewer. Amongst them, reflecting in its sullen surface the scattered branches of the pine trees above, was a pool of water but a few yards across. Its surface was undisturbed and it looked black with depth.

"This task is yours," said the old man. "Empty this pool of its waters. No other task I give you."

He went on through the sparse pine trees till the darker woods received him and hid him.

The young man remained there, thinking. Then with a stone for a weight, and as long a plummet line as he could make, he tried to sound the pool. And sometimes he thought he had found the bottom; but it was only the weight resting on a ledge of rock. So when all his line was exhausted he gave up the attempt and set to work.

He hewed trees down and made levers and pries, and detached great masses of rock. Day and night he laboured, making a channel for the water to flow away by, and soon he made a passage and led a great current away from the pool.

But the still black surface hardly sank. Harder and harder he laboured till he led almost a river from the head of the pool flowing to the sloping lands of the south. And now the surface of the pool had receded more deeply below the rocks around it; and down by it, where he was at work, the sky looked small and dark. Still the water was not gone and the river kept flowing and flowing.

As he was working here he heard the old man's voice calling to him from above, and the words were: "Cast in your plummet line now again and see how deep the pool is."

So he cast in long lengths of line one after another, but reached not the bottom: therefore he sent answer back: "I cannot tell how deep the pool is; but deeper it seems to me than when I first began."

"Arise from your labour and come with me," the old man shouted into the depths.

Together they journeyed through the bare pine stems with the sharp broken branches jutting out, and the brown soil beneath their feet, till they came to where the forest opened to reveal its secrets.

And there, shone on by the sun, while a flight of wild birds circled round and round, lay a vast open plain hollowing towards the centre and here and there confused with masses of rift and blackened tree-trunks. But down the sides the grass had already begun to grow, and the deer of the forest found there the richest pasture land. Then the old man, turning, said: "You have fulfilled your task. Henceforth dwell in peace and make the land before you habitable and fair."

The young man, who was a young man no longer, looked forward over

the expanse with joy. Then turning back to the old man he said: "But what completion is there to my labours whereto you set me? for the waters of the pool are as deep as ever!" Then the old man made answer:

"When you trembled to attempt to conquer the waves of the lake, I took you to the pool in the wood and bade you subdue it, you did not hesitate to attempt that. But know that in reality the pool and the lake are one and the same; for there is an underground channel that connects them and by lowering the waters of the pool you have emptied the lake."

Then the other asked him, "But how deep is the pool?"

"It is deeper than can ever be fathomed," answered the old man, "and you will sooner drain away all the waters of the earth than reach the bottom of it."

Therewith he went away and disappeared for the last time beneath the dark green of the waving pine-tree boughs, leaving the other to enter upon the fulfillment of his labours.

So thou who wishest to conquer the world, but fearest the greatness of the task and hast no means, learn that if thou conquerest thyself, thou wilt find (though in what way it will be, thou knowest not now) that thou hast achieved. And when thou hast achieved, the dark pool that is thyself, will still stretch unfathomably, endlessly down.

C. H. Hinton.

Notes on the Astral Light.

To the student of occultism few more absorbing subjects present themselves than that of the Astral Light; and when one considers its strange sights and sounds, the mysterious creatures by whom it is inhabited, the enormous and incalculable influence it exerts on our lives and destinies, it is not surprising that information should eagerly be sought from the explorers of so fascinating a region. One of the most indefatigable of these inquirers was the late Abbé Constant—better known, perhaps, under the nom de plume of "Eliphas Lévi." As his works, however, are not translated, there are many would-be readers to whom they are not accessible; and it is in the belief that, to such, a brief compendium of his more important remarks would be not unwelcome, the following Notes made by a theosophist in the course of his own studies are offered.

If they should seem lacking in symmetry, or even entire continuity, it must be borne in mind that they are only what they profess to be—"Notes"; or, more correctly speaking, verbatim extracts from the various volumes in

which this subject is treated of, often in connection with other, though kindred topics; they may fairly claim to be faithful and accurate translations—as any one may verify—but they make no pretense to literary finish; they are simply the words of the author, without alteration or comment; for this reason quotation marks are unnecessary, all that follows this paragraph being translation pure and simple.

The primordial light vehicle of all ideas, is the Mother of all forms, and transmits them from emanation to emanation, diminished or altered only by the density of the surroundings: the forms of objects, being modifications of this light, remain in the light where they are reflected back: thus the Astral Light, or the terrestrial fluid termed the Grand Magical Agent, is saturated with images or reflections of all kinds, which the soul can evoke and submit to what the Cabalists call its "lucidity."

These images are always before us, and are only temporarily obscured by the more obtrusive impressions of reality during our waking hours, or by the pre-occupation of our thoughts, which render our imagination inattentive to the shifting panorama of the Astral Light; when we are asleep, they present themselves to us of their own accord and thus dreams are produced; dreams which are vague and incoherent, unless some dominant wish remains active during our sleep and gives, although unknown to us, a direction to the dream, which thus becomes a vision.

The Astral Light acts directly upon the nerves, which are its conductors in the physical economy, and which convey it to the brain: thus a somnambulist can see by the nerves, without needing material light: the astral fluid containing latent light, just as science recognizes latent heat.

The empire of the Will over the Astral Light, which is the physical soul of the four elements, is symbolized in Magic by the Pentagram; by means of this we can compel spirits to appear in visions, either when awake or asleep, by bringing before our lucidity their reflection which exists in the Astral Light, if they have lived, or the reflection of their spiritual nature, if they have never lived; this explains all visions, and demonstrates, especially, why those who see the dead see them always either as they were when alive, or as they are while yet in the grave, and never as they are in that state of existence which escapes the perception of our present organization.

When the Magician has attained perfect lucidity, he can direct at will the magnetic vibrations in the whole mass of the Astral Light; by means of these vibrations he can influence the nervous systems of persons, quicken or retard the currents of life, soothe or trouble, cure or make ill—in a word, kill or raise from the dead. The lucid will is able to act upon the mass of the Astral Light, and, in concert with other wills which it thus absorbs and utilizes, compels immense and irresistible currents. It should also be noted that the Astral Light can render itself denser or rarer, accord-

ing as the currents accumulate or scatter it, at given centres; when it lacks sufficient energy to nourish life, there result diseases which terminate with fatal suddenness, and are the despair of physicians.

The Astral Light is the omnipresent tempter, symbolized by the serpent of Genesis; this subtle agent, ever active, ever abounding in power, flowing with seductive dreams and pleasing images: this force blind in itself, and swayed by the wills of others either for good or evil; this circulating medium, ever vivified with unquenchable life, that causes vertigo to the rash spectator; this material spirit, this fiery body, this impalpable and all-pervading ether, this enormous seduction of Nature—how shall we define its entirety, how qualify its actions? Indifferent, so to speak, in its nature, it lends itself alike to good or evil—it diffuses light and brings darkness; it is a serpent, but also an aureole; it is fire, but it may either be that which belongs to the torments of Hell, or that which carries up the incense offered to Heaven.

To be its master, we must, like the woman of the Bible, trample its head under our feet.

To vanquish the serpent, that is to dominate the circle of the Astral Light, we must be able to place ourselves outside of its currents; in other words, to insulate ourselves. This torrent of universal life is also pictured in religious dogmas as the expiatory fire of Hell. It is the instrument of Initiation, the monster to be subdued, the enemy to be vanquished; it produces the larvæ and phantoms that respond to the evocations and conjurations of Black Magic; in it are preserved those forms whose fortuitous and fantastic assemblage people our nightmares with such abominable monsters. To allow ourselves to be swept away by this raging flood is to fall into abysses of madness more frightful than death, to drive away the darkness of this chaos and compel it to give perfect forms to our ideas, is to create, to have triumphed over Hell. The Astral Light directs the instincts of animals, and combats the intelligences of man, which it tends to pervert by the splendour of its reflections and the falsity of its images; this fatal and unavoidable tendency guides and renders still more injurious, the Elementals and Elementaries; whose restless desires seek sympathy in our weakness, and tempt us not so much in order to cause our destruction, as for their own benefit. The Book of Conscience, which according to the christian dogmas is to be made manifest at the Last Judgment, is nothing more or less than the Astral Light, in which are preserved the impressions of all our words, that is to say of all our deeds and of all forms.

Those who renounce the empire of reason, and allow their will to wander after the reflections of the Astral Light are subject to alternations of madness and melancholy, which lead them to imagine these wonders to be the result of possessions of a demon; and there is no doubt that by means

of these reflections evil spirits are able to influence impure souls and make them their docile instruments, and cause them to torment the organisms in which they dwell. It is, therefore, extremely dangerous to trifle with the mysteries of Magic, and above all supremely rash to practice its rites from curiosity, and by such experiments to tempt the higher powers; and the inquisitive who, not being Adepts, meddle with evocations or occult magnetism, are like children playing on a barrel of gunpowder—sooner or later they will be the victims of a terrible explosion. To insulate ourselves from the Astral Light, it does not suffice merely to envelope ourselves in a mantle of wool, as did Appolonius of Tyana; above and beyond all, the heart and spirit must be absolutely calm, freed from the dominion of the passions, and assured of perseverance in action by an inflexible will; and these acts of will must be ceaselessly repeated, for only by persistence in such acts does the will become strong. There are certain intoxicating substances which, by heightening the nervous susceptibility, augment the power of the representations of the Astral Light and consequently increase its seductions; by means of these, also, when used in a contrary direction, spirits can be terrified or subdued.

In order to command the Astral Light, it is necessary to understand its double vibration, and the balance of forces known as magic equilibrium.

This equilibrium, regarded in its primal cause, is the will of God: in man, it is liberty; in matter, it is mathematical equilibrium. Equilibrium produces stability and duration. Liberty brings forth the immortality of man, and the will of God formulates the laws of eternal right. Equilibrium in ideas is wisdom; in forces it is power; equilibrium is rigorous, if the law is kept, it exists; if it be violated, though ever so little, it does not exist. It is for this reason that nothing is useless, or wasted, every word, every motion, is for or against equilibrium, for or against Truth; for equilibrium represents Truth, which is composed of contraries which are reconciled, or at least equilibrated. Almighty power is the most absolute Liberty; but absolute Liberty cannot exist without perfect equilibrium; magic equilibrium is therefore one of the first conditions of success in the operations of science; and we must seek it even in occult chemistry by learning to combine contraries without neutralizing them. By magic equilibrium is explained the great and ancient mystery of the existence and relative necessity of Evil; this relative necessity, in Black Magic, furnishes a measure of the power of demons, or evil spirits, to whom the virtues practised on earth impart more fury, and apparently more power.

B. N. Acle, F. T. S.

(*To be continued.*)

Some Teachings of a German Mystic.

II.

THE TRUE DESTINY OF MAN.

[From the German of J. Kernning.]

There are two poles at the extremes of man's nature.[1] Man can live in the most perfect light, in complete certainty, and wholly according to the law of the spirit. It is also possible for him to make darkness his element, and to pass his earthly existence in complete obscurity. At each of these two poles he is, in a certain sense, perfect, forming there a complete unity in himself. Now when a person, either through impulse from within, or in consequence of some unusual chance, is violently taken out of the darkness into the light, it is inevitable that his entire nature should be thrown out of gear, as it were. In consequence, spiritual as well as physical conditions are brought about which the average psychologist can only account for by classifying them as maladies of some kind. If we could accompany the physicians into their sick-chambers we should be brought face to face with cases originating solely in such transitions, and which are not to be relieved except by bringing about an equilibrium between soul and body.

All that is violent causes an extreme agitation, and therefore such consequences attend the violent transition from night to the light of truth. There are, however, many childlike and gentle souls whom we know in ordinary life, and who possess only a calm faith, but if they are observed closely they will be found to perceive and value their higher life in its entire comprehensiveness. Everything in nature has its correspondence, and therefore we should not be frightened on encountering unusual phenomena.

Man has strayed from the Path and must retrace his steps in order to go aright.[2] That which he has amassed while upon the wrong road has united itself with his being, and may not be so easily expelled or rendered inactive.[3] Spiritual functions are uninterruptedly operative; they create and construct words, ideas, forms and figures which, as we see in dreams, torment, love, and follow us against our wills. If we withdraw from our

1 "In man, taken individually or as a whole, there clearly exists a double constitution. Two great tides of emotion sweep through his nature, two great forces guide his life; the one makes him an animal, and the other makes him a god."—*Through the Gates of Gold.*

2 "Turn round, and instead of standing against the forces, join them; become one with nature, and go easily upon her path. Do not resist or resent the circumstances of life any more than the plants resent the rain and the wind. Then suddenly, to your own amazement, you find you have time and to spare, to use in the great battle which it is inevitable every man must fight, that in himself, that which leads to his own conquest.—*Gates of Gold.*

3 The Karma of the individual. To retrace one's steps is to live in the eternal; to become one with nature, and lift one's self "out of the region in which Karma operates."

outer life a part of its influence upon us, it can easily come to pass that the powers ever existing behind that influence may cause us to behold pictures and to hear words which lead us astray and, for a time, bring us into conflict with ourselves.[1] Whoever does not lose courage because of this trial, and steadfastly pursues his higher aim, will gain the mastery of these hostile powers and at last hear words of life and behold heavenly visions.

The path to the Life leads through labyrinths. Blessed be he who finds a thread laid by a loving hand to lead him more certainly to the exit; he advances with calm step, and in his loving trust in the thread that he follows he thereby gains the victory over all adversity.

A star of heaven guides us out of the darkness if our inner eye is awakened to life. Whoever may behold this star, let him follow it confidently[2] and not permit himself to be led astray by the theories of the day which ascribe such phenomena simply to the state of the blood, and often even to the weather. Man possesses within himself an infallible guide which conducts him safely through all mist, and it can be banished only by himself.

Reference to the Greek mythology affords us a significant example of how all the various powers of Nature interpenetrate and work in each other. We see, as with our eyes, how God excludes no creature from His heaven, if it takes the pains, in some degree, to seek and recognize Him. Attention is called to the three primeval powers of the universe, each of which exists independently only in the mind of the student, but in Nature these powers are never wholly separated from each other. The Earth (or matter) is a primeval and eternal power; Life likewise is; so also is God, who, as generator, stands over all things, containing them and reigning over them. Though our body may pass away, the divine element, which never separates itself either from life or from matter, will unite itself with other materials in order to lead us to eternal life.[3]

Matter, life and divinity, or, according to our conception, the power of mind, are essential to the perfected life. We may see how natural this union is, and we have therefore nothing more to do than to live according to the highest law, and subordinate thereto, body and soul (life) in the most complete agreement. Then we are in heaven, and we continually

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1 The activity of elementals. Their appearance generates fear, the Dweller on the Threshold. The effort to lift one's self above the plane of Karma concentrates karmic action.

2 "Look for the warrior, and let him fight in thee."—*Light on the Path.*

3 This passage is particularly significant. The Western Mystics, in their writings, have been reticent concerning the great teaching of reincarnation, probably because misconceptions concerning it so easily arise among the uninitiated. Kenning, however, frequently gives marked hints, and to whomsoever hath ears to hear, nothing could be plainer than these words referring to the conscious reincarnation of those who have united the lower self with their higher.

draw from the other two primeval powers new nourishment to maintain an eternal existence.[1]

Man must possess himself wholly; this is the end of all teaching. Not alone in the heart or in the head; but throughout the entire body man must learn to perceive and recognize.[2] Otherwise he mutilates himself and becomes worthless for a perfected life.

Herein lies the mistake of persons who ascribe more holiness to one part of the body than to another part, though their daily experience teaches them that no member is without use and that each must necessarily exist in order to fulfill the intention of the Creator.[3]

Seek to receive that which thou hast and consider where thy life most plainly manifests itself; there thou art nearest to God. But be not partisan with thy functions, and hold to the conviction that perfection must possess all powers.[4]

In the deepest tones of music the higher tones are contained. Therefore descend into the lowest chambers of the body and bear in mind that Christ also descended into hell in order to arouse all souls and powers into life.

Rest not until thou hast in all parts formed in thyself a lense through which thou canst look into eternity. Do not be led astray when the world takes only thy head into account and endeavors to fill it with all possible facts until it threatens to set up for itself and to secede from thy emotions. Remain steadfast and contain thyself wholly; else thou art like to one crucified, whose bones have been broken on the cross, and therefore may not be taken down.[5]

Trust to time and rule the moment! This lesson appears in these teachings very plainly; for years are demanded before man attains the ripeness which enables him to discover the kernel of his life and to use it as his guide.

Many will say that this teaching is not practical, because it demands retirement from the world, and even from business callings. Whoever, while in the world and attending to the demands of his calling, can gain

1 Artificial reincarnation. "This state is possible to man while yet he lives in the physical: for men have attained it while living."—*Gates of Gold*. "He can learn also to hold within him the glory of that highest self, and yet to retain life upon this planet so long as it shall last, if need be."—*Idyll of the White Lotus*.

2 "While his eyes and hands and feet are thus fulfilling their tasks, new eyes and hands and feet are being born within him."—*Gates of Gold*.

3 "Courage to search the recesses of one's own nature without fear and without shame."—*Gates of Gold*.

4 "The chief point of importance is to explore no more persistently on one line than another: else the result must be deformity."—*Gates of Gold*.

5 "Forget no inch of your garden ground, no smallest plant that grows in it; make no foolish pretence nor fond mistake in the fancy that you are ready to forget it, and so subject it to the frightful consequences of half-measures."—*Gates of Gold*. The garden is the personality; the plants are the attributes that compose it, and whose potentialities must be developed.

his inner life, has no necessity for going into retirement; he who, however, in spite of his desire and his efforts, remains in darkness, must withdraw from the obstacles standing in his way, if he will not renounce the future and his own self.

But it is well for us that there are but few earthly circumstances that have a disturbing effect upon the development of our new life, and therefore we will stand by our calling with strict attention to duty,[1] giving our fellow men an example of fidelity and love, and regarding all that we do as done in God.

The conditions of life where our ambition, our acuteness—or rather slyness—are called into play, are those which are most difficult to unite with a striving towards spiritual truth, because they usually command the entire attention of the man, making idols of his personal traits, in the presence of which he stands in a glamour and to which alone he pays his devotions.

Those forms of business which can be carried on with earnest industry, with calm deliberation and thought, are not only not hindering in their effect, but often beneficial, because they counteract any violent revolutions of our nature, and draw all things into the silent way of our patience.

Therefore let no one lose heart because of any given example, but after his own way seek the good that is offered in these teachings. The inner and the outer life are always in the most exact accord with each other. A tender body will never long for the club of Hercules; neither will a giant ever desire to sport with violets, but with great tree-trunks and mighty cliffs. So it is in the realm of mind; ideas adjust themselves according to their possessor, and their representations change on their transference to another individual.

This is the aim of all life: Seek the spirit within thee; then thou art sure. But seek thine own spirit; not that of another. Herein lies a fundamental error of mankind; ever shaping their course according to other persons, and never paying sufficient attention to themselves. The spirit of another will never be mine; it can do no more than light the way to my temple for me. But no more than I can take the arm of another, set it in the place of my own, and use it, may the power of the spirit be enclosed in other forms. Glasses may with water be tuned into harmony; but pour the water into other glasses and then thou hast no harmony and, indeed, none of the former tones remaining. All that thou desirest must come forth from thyself; if thou canst not accomplish this, then thou must learn it; cut loose from all that belongs not to thee; seek thine own Self, never the Self of another.[2] Then only is it possible to attain the certainty of knowledge.

1 "He neglects no duty or office however homely or however difficult."—*Gates of Gold.*

2 "Listen to the song of life. Look for it, and listen to it, first in your own heart."—*Light on the Path.*

Harmony of tones, and mathematical forms, rest upon infallible principles and therefore cannot deceive us; even so clear must the harmony of life manifest itself unto thee. This harmony also is founded upon inalterable laws, and contains infallibility within itself.[1]

Infallibility is our aim; all men strive for infallibility, from the laborer in the field up to the highest scientist; each seeks to know his task completely.

Many succeed in accomplishing it; many others but partially; it is in nature, however, to endeavor. Well, then seek infallibility there where Life itself is concerned, where the prize is imperishable and in ever renewed beauty becomes thine own!

Exchange not thy life for the shimmer thereof! What wouldst thou say of a mathematician who only took pleasure in the peculiar geometrical figures, and troubled not himself about their inherent necessity and their truth? Wouldst thou not call such an one a fool? Is it not even like folly to revel in the phenomena of life, but not to seek the laws governing those phenomena, finding in these laws the true and highest joy?

Where we behold eternal Truth, there we shall thank God who has given us the faculty wherewith we may recognize it. It is not truth which should rejoice us, but the gift that enables us to receive it, by which we may lift ourselves to the eternal law, and through that to immortality.

God is the eternal Truth. He has given us of His light that we may depart out of the darkness and live in His glory.

God is everywhere, Truth is everywhere, and man is created to the knowledge of God and the recognition of Truth. Let us believe these principles and unite ourselves with the Everlasting and All-Powerful, that we may flourish under their protection and enter in upon immortality.[2]

THOUGHTS IN SOLITUDE.

V.

THE TWO PATHWAYS.

In man's attempt to pierce the dark mists of ignorance that surround him, in his search after the perfect life, two ideas alternately dominate his horizon—two pathways seem alternately to invite his footsteps. These may roughly be designated as the Scientific and the Religious.

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1 "Learn from it the lesson of harmony."—*Light on the Path.*

2 These notes show clearly the agreement of the teachings recently given out with those of earlier mystics, who may seem to be on a different line, but who receive their light from the identical source. Whoever may desire to learn is advised to consider these notes earnestly in the works from which they are quoted, together with their contexts, as well as the above teachings. The one will help an understanding of the other, and throw light on meanings that have been obscure. Consider and reflect thereupon earnestly and repeatedly. If this injunction be followed, some degree of illumination concerning their interior meanings will surely result.

When full consideration is given to the stupendousness of the undertaking, to the almost inconceivable heights at which we aim ; when it is realized that we aspire to reach the ranks of the Dhyan Chohans, the rulers of our Planetary System : to become, in fact, part of that diffused Divine consciousness in which is upheld the life of the World, does it not seem reasonable to conclude that all knowledge and all power must have been realized and beneficently practised by such an one in his upward course—that the conquering of the desires of the outer senses must have been accompanied by the development of the inner senses, through whose agency the whole elemental kingdom must have been cognised and conquered, and the hearts and minds of men read as in an open book?

But when the disciple realizes that all earthly power, honor, dominion, has long been put aside by him as valueless—that the one word which has dominated his being is love, and that the failure to realize any perfect union on earth has created and intensified the desire to plunge and to be lost in the Nirvanic ocean of Divinity, will not the attainment of powers and the development of inner senses appear to him as mere circumlocution and surplusage? Why not make for his goal at once? The bondage of material life being but the impulse to act, liberation consists in destroying this impulse, not by suppression, but by the knowledge that the ego is independent of it. This knowledge is attained through faith, but the faith that leads up to it is liable to die if not fed by obedience to the will of God—"If thou wouldst enter the life, keep the commandments"—the commandments set in the various Scriptures of Humanity—then in long-suffering patience work out the term of imprisonment in flesh.

"Ruling the flesh
"By mind, governing mind with ordered Will ;
"Subduing Will by knowledge, making this
"Serve the firm Spirit, and the Spirit cling
"As Soul to the eternal changeless Soul,"

till the "dark" and "passionate" qualities of Nature have melted away, and the serenity of "Satwa" alone remains. And the soul, which has centred itself more and more on the Supreme Soul, will find its earthly ties gradually dissolve, until the last one disappears, and it naturally gravitates to its eternal home.

This is a lovely picture, and there are many to whom such a pathway—the pathway of Religion—must have inconceivable attractions ; but let us pause and consider well whether it is one which we in this Kali Yug are yet fitted to follow to the exclusion of all others.

If we were such complete masters of the physical nature as to be absolutely fearless under any conceivable circumstances, and if our hearts were filled with such an all-embracing love for Humanity that at no moment

would we hesitate to lay down our lives for it, we might, perhaps consider ourselves worthy of passing through the final gateway of contemplative devotion. Doubtless there are few men, worthy of the name, who have not risen, in moments of exaltation, to the thought that even the physical well-being—let alone the eternal salvation!—of suffering Humanity would be cheaply purchased by his death. It needs not to turn for an example to the Cross of Calvary, though that is regarded by Christians who fail to realize the inner meaning of their own faith as something uniquely transcendental in its self-sacrifice. Heroism is not so far to seek, and History can point to many a martyr who has braved as painful and ignominious a death without the stupendous motive for the sacrifice, such as might well goad any high-souled man to make it. But it is another thing to live constantly in the devoted frame of mind referred to, from merely rising to it in moments of exaltation.

Doubtless, also, there are men who, by the judicious use of right emotion, can, at times, so nerve themselves that fear shall seem an unknown word; but who is able to live in constant disregard of consequences, even on the physical plane with which we are tolerably well acquainted? So long as the horrors of the unknown psychic plane transcend anything we can conceive of on the physical, or while the realms of darkness contain one thought of terror for our imaginations, how can we consider ourselves worthy of the final crown of being? For is it not Perfection that we aim at? And where a trace of fear is present, or where love in its plenitude is absent, how can we expect to be within measurable distance of our goal? Four lines from one of Matthew Arnold's poems, many of which seem to breathe a subtle, though possibly unintentional aroma of occult thought, may here partially help to express the idea intended:

"And he who flagged not in the earthly strife
"From strength to strength advancing—only he,
"His soul well knit, and all his battles won,
"Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life."

Though it must be remembered that fear is an attribute of the physical only, there is an interblending of the elements of our nature, and it stands to reason that the unknown sights and sounds of the plane just beyond that of which the physical is cognisant are capable of striking a far deeper terror, as well as of fascinating with a more subtle power.

And is it not logical to suppose that, as the disciple has gradually realized the unsatisfying nature of all earthly things—has learned to put aside its temptations, and to rise occasionally to a standpoint where its fears cannot assail him, so he must start on his journey of discovery in the unknown psychic world—armed always with the firm will and the lofty aspirations towards the Spirit—till he has learned also that its attractions

cannot detain him, and that he has the power within him to dominate its terrors?

Until, therefore, we can stand as master in our house of life, and until the "Enthusiasm of Humanity" has possessed our Being, we must not imagine that we can discard the Scientific pathway before we have really begun to tread it. Indeed, the desire to tread the Religious path alone may, in some cases, have a partially selfish origin not altogether unallied to the slothful quality of "Tamas."

When it is realized, too, that work for Humanity "all up the line" is the prevailing rule, that the Divine and Semi-divine beings whom we know under the name of Mahatmas and Adepts are unremitting in their arduous work for the race, it will become apparent that the breaking down of the walls of our personality, and the merging of our individual being in the universal Divine Being, is a very far-off goal, which not all of them even have yet reached.

The attitude of mind of all students of Occultism towards the great mass of Humanity, must, as stated in Zanoni, be one either of pity or of scorn—as a fact, it seems to fluctuate between these two. The feeling of scorn, indeed, easily rises in the breast when contemplating the petty aims and prejudiced views of even the noblest and worthiest specimens of the race we have known; and when to a naturally proud disposition is added the conviction that the objects of desire striven for by the mass of men are below contempt, the feeling of scorn often seems to carry all before it; and when it is felt that through pain and suffering heights of thought have been scaled, and that contemporaries, and even those who were once looked up to as teachers, have been left below, it often seems as if the only refuge from the lonesome isolation were to be found in a scornful pride. But surely, pity is the truer feeling, and it must be with relief that the disciple turns to the softer memories of past years, when the mere glance of a passer in the street carried home a tale of untold endurance and uncomplaining suffering, or when a modulation of voice opened the flood-gates of emotion, and the deep pathos of the fate of this suffering Humanity seemed to bind all together in community of being. It is in such moments as these, when it is realized that the supremest bliss would be obtained by the utter abandonment of "self" for the Great Cause, that the two pathways really merge in one, and it is felt that the "great renunciation" must be the final outcome alike of the love of God and of the service of Man.

It would seem, then, that our efforts to identify ourselves with the great whole must not be confined to yearnings after the ineffable Perfection, but must also take the form of work, on whatever plane it may be, for a more or less recognisedly concrete Humanity. It is very difficult to know what special form this work should take. While fully accepting the ideas ex-

pressed in Number II. of this series, as to the futility of attempting to exert paramount influence on the thoughts of others. Ignorance must yet be recognised as the prime curse of mankind; the attempts at diffusion of the true philosophic thought must, therefore, ever stand in the first place; and doubtless, along with the increased effort to enlighten Humanity, there will arise in the heart of the worker a greater love for and identification with Humanity which must lead to a more or less partial breaking down of the partition walls of his individuality.

If we turn from the evolution of the individual to the evolution of the race as a whole, the analogous thoughts which occur are, that while the veil of obscurity must ever hide the future, and while it must remain impossible for us to know whether our special efforts in this or in that direction are destined to be successful, it may broadly be stated that—at least in this Western civilization of ours—individualism seems to have reached its zenith, and that the problems for the race to work out in the future will probably lie in the altruistic effort to supplant individualism by schemes which will more or less recognise the underlying Brotherhood of Humanity. The societies of to-day that call themselves Socialistic put forward plans that may be utterly inchoate and unworkable—and some of their members certainly appear to hold opinions as to the rights of revolution and violence which are alike hateful and fearsome to all true lovers of order—but those who think their work lies in this direction will doubtless feel impelled to try and discover the truth that underlies all these manifestations, with the view of guiding, if possible, the forces towards a peaceful issue.

The development of the inner senses is also one of the many pathways that must be pursued for the attainment of the real knowledge and power whereby we may potently help this suffering humanity, and give our aid to the few strong hands who hold back the powers of darkness "from obtaining complete victory." When by the unfoldment of the inner perceptions, we have reached the platform whence earthly life is seen as from a height, the physical nature will have become a mighty tool in our hands to be used in the service of man. What vistas of work for the race will then unfold to our view! Of those who can grasp this idea by strong immaginative power, some will, no doubt, feel urged to force the development, though such forcing must doubtless be attended with danger. That it can be forced is a fact known to many students of occultism, and he who is in earnest will doubtless find a more or less competent instructor. To step consciously into situations where previous experience will be unavailing and where dangers are known to exist certainly requires courage, but how is greater strength to be gained or courage to be acquired save by undertaking the task and facing the danger? Nothing should be done rashly, and every step should be taken with due caution, but the path will have to be trod

some day, and if only a little courage and a little strength are already possessed, this would seem to be a means of increasing our store of them. A sudden stoppage of the heart by an access of sheer terror, or a death in life dragged on to the grave through the delirium of madness, are awful possibilities to contemplate, but even were the investigator by some rash attempt to make utter wreck of himself in conflict with one of the elemental forces of nature, it should always be remembered that it would only be of his present earth-life that the wreck would be made, and that when his time came to appear again on the earthly scene, he would doubtless come back endowed with greater powers than if he had not made the attempt at all.

The separation throughout this paper of the two pathways, the Scientific and the Religious, has been made, it must be remembered, for purposes of contrast. Such division is purely arbitrary. Man's nature is indeed complex, but it is a unity in complexity; similarly, the path, though multiform, is one. But it is more especially in carrying out such investigations or developments as those just dwelt on that the supreme necessity of the qualities known as the devotional or religious is apparent. Indeed, it may safely be asserted that the searcher who starts with a mere scientific interest, and in his own strength only, runs the greatest possible danger, while he is certain of success whose animating motive is the all-embracing love of Humanity, or the still intenser worship of the Supreme Perfection. If the old self regains its dominance, the disciple may well tremble, for in such moments the "Dweller of the Threshold" has a secret ally in the man's inner stronghold; but while the love and the faith continue to be his guiding impulses failure is impossible, for when "Self" is cast aside, what is there to fear for? and when God dwells in the heart, then is strength made perfect.

PILGRIM.

TEA TABLE TALK.

Recently the newspapers were full of a curious case of "dual existence," which occurred in Norristown, Pa. A gentleman had come to that town some three months previous to the event under discussion and entered into business there. He was a staid, quiet, responsible man and soon won the respect and regard of his fellow townsmen. He had taken board with a family in the place, and one night in March, three months after his arrival, he awoke them in a state of terrible agitation, demanding to know where he was, and how he came to be under that roof with perfect strangers. His friends en-

deavoured to calm him, and called him by the name under which they knew him, but this only increased his alarm. He said he knew none of them, nor yet the house or town, that he was one Mr. Ansel Bourne, of Providence, named his relatives, and insisted that his nephew, Andrew Harris, should be sent for at once. This was done, and the recognition between the gentlemen was instantaneous. A hundred advertisements for the missing Mr. Bourne had been inserted in the papers, but he had escaped recognition by reason of some tonsorial changes in his beard. From the moment he left home until he "woke up" in Norristown, his whole life was an entire blank to him, and yet investigation showed it to have passed so blamelessly as to place him above suspicion. After recovering his normal consciousness he was much unnerved and broken down for some days.

Singularly enough, there had appeared in the *Forum* of that month, an article by Dr. Hammond on similar cases of dual consciousness. These are known to occur, but it is quite rare to find one of such an extended period, and so complete as the case above cited, where a man planned and carried out a conservative and novel business, under another name and character, so to say. Dr. Hammond states that these cases are attributed to the separate actions of the lobes of the brain. It would be difficult to prove however that any such consciousness as the new one exhibited in its completeness by Mr. Bourne, could have entered in the left lobe of his brain, where it had never been experienced by him in his present life. It may indeed be possible where such subjects constantly exhibit this reversion of state, and pass from habits of moral living to those of violence or ferocity. But in the case of Mr. Bourne, for the time being a new personality, with new business habits, opinions, customs and a name, sought a home and an occupation congenial to itself, in the body of a man who was happy and contented, as well as respected, in previous surroundings of his own, to which he returned and was welcomed when the strange experience was past.

For such states, a far more plausible theory than that of the modern physiologist, is offered by occultism. When our astral man leaves the body, whether consciously or unconsciously, it may become the home of an elementary with a strong desire for a return to earth life, especially if our principles are loosely put together, and if we have incautiously left the body of our own will.

Latterly a friend related a strange experience to the Tea Table. He had been brought up among the Welsh, and was a firm disbeliever in the "supernaturalism" so rife among that people, until occultism explained to him so many of the strange occurrences and sights he had hitherto defied. From childhood he had been used to see "strange things moving about like fishes in the sea," to hear strange sounds and see distant places or objects, though his sturdy attitude of negation, and his attributing them to optical or nervous defects, had of late years somewhat lessened the number of these phenomena. One day recently, he had been reading of some psychometric experiments, and fell to thinking of some place to which he desired to go. Closing his eyes, he thought strongly of this place, determined to see, if possible, a person who

was there. All at once an indescribable lightness seemed to pervade his whole person. He thought—"I can go there!" and rising, was half across the room in a moment, when turning his head, he beheld himself seated in the chair he had left. At this a nameless horror seized him, a dreadful fear; he rushed back into his body,—how, he knew not—overcome with terror at his own involuntary act.

This fact of his undue alarm and its possible cause excited some discussion around the Tea Table. Finally it was agreed to write to an eminent occultist on the subject. His reply will interest all students of this important branch of occultism.

"Why did he have a horror when he nearly succeeded in getting away from his body; in being for a moment free? That is an important question. Its solution may be found in many ways. I will mention one. If the place, or person, he wished to go to was one to which he ought not then to have gone, or if his motive in desiring to go there was not pure, then a horror might result that drove him back. Motive is highly important, and must be examined and tested countless times. The meaning of the word *motive* must not here be limited to what is called bad or improper motive. I will just as willingly examine into bad as into good motives, and no matter how lurid the light on them, I will still examine them impartially. If one has a bad motive, then the results are his own Karma, and not that of any other, except those who willingly take it on themselves.

"In the above case, indifference of motive is just as much to be guarded against as any other sort. For in leaving the body without motive, we leave it under the impressions of Tamoguna (Darkness) and when set free we are very likely to be caught in a whirl which is far from pleasant. Horror may then result. I do not say it always will result. But great forces are not to be set in motion with impunity. We must be able to put down and control an equal opposition, and good motive alone affords us this balance of power by setting the Law on our side. The highest possible motive must be laid at the bottom, or else we will meet trouble which only power can overcome.

"Yet again, if even with a bad motive he had attempted to go to a place where a similar motive existed, then no horror would have come. For it is not necessarily a horror-producing thing to leave the body. Only lately I know of a friend who went out of his body a distance of 10,000 miles and had no horror. In that case he desired to see a friend on a common purpose which had in view the amelioration of this dark age; and again, who left his body and saw the surrounding sweeps of wood and vale, and had no horror in either case. Similarity of motive creates an electric or magnetic current along which we may possibly proceed in safety provided it is not crossed by a still stronger current.

"This inquirer lays much stress upon the fact that he was 'rushing back' to his body of his own accord. That does not prove that he was not pushed back. When the saturated solution in a glass is disturbed, *itself, by its own volition*, crystallizes, but it had first to have the predisposing cause in the shape of the blow on the glass. So although he 'rushed back,' it was be-

cause of the push he received from something he cannot describe nor understand.

"An illustration will show the dangers. Take the case of one who determines to leave the body merely to go to another who is admired by him, or whom he desires to see. This other, however, is protected by high motives and great purity. The first is mixed in motive in waking life, which as soon as the disengaged state comes on is changed into a mere will or curiosity to see the second, combined perhaps with more or less selfish purpose, or perhaps a sensuous feeling or worldly intent. The elementals and other guardians of the second protect that soul, and hurl vague horrors at the first, who, if he is not a skilled black magician is—

a. Either merely pushed back into the body, or:

b. Is assailed with fears that prevent him from finding or entering his body, and that may be occupied by an elementary, good, bad or indifferent, and his friends say he waked up suddenly insane.

"Motive is then the main point for this and every inquirer to study. If he is sure of his motives, and that they are neither indifferent, curious, selfish, nor imprudent, and he trusts in the Unity of the Supreme Soul, he cannot be in much danger."

It will be obvious that a powerful elementary might depose a personality of weak or mediumistic tendencies at a moment when the Karma of such a person permitted it, under the unconscious withdrawal of the astral man or his lethargy during sleep, and be in turn at some future moment compelled to give up its stolen habitation by the expiration of the Karmic debt of the real and exiled man, who could then return. If we will only study the strange events constantly transpiring around us, and even those called normal, in so far as to ask ourselves why they should be so more than any others, we may learn much of the constitution of life and of Man, who shapes it.

JULIUS.

LITERARY AND THEOSOPHICAL NOTES.

PRAYER BOOK OF THE ARYANS.—This is a small pamphlet published in India by R. C. Bary, at Lahore,[1] as an attempt to give to the world in English garb, the prayerful utterance of the ancient Aryans. The arrangement of the Vedic Mantras observed is in accordance with the ideas of the late Dayanand Saraswati, Swami. The perusal of this pamphlet will convince any candid man that the ancient Aryans were not ignorant of true science nor devoid of the highest religious feeling. The verses translated are the *Sandhia* and *Gayatree*, and the original Sanscrit text is also printed. This pamphlet can be had of the publisher, and we presume the price is not over 50 cents, as it is not advertized.

THE VEDAS, in English.[2] Ruttan Chand Bary, proprietor of the "Arya" Magazine, at Lahore, India, has begun a translation, with a commentary, of

1 R. C. Bary, Managing Proprietor "Arya" Magazine, Said Mitha Bazaar, Lahore, India.

2 Price per copy, each number, 2 shillings English.

the Vedas into English in the 46th number of his Magazine. He begins with the *Rig Veda Sanhita*, going as far as Arinvaka 1, Sukta 3 and Varga 6, that is in all thirty verses. Mr. Bary's purpose is to bring out the translation of the Rig, the Yagur, the Artharva and the Sama, Vedas, following the commentaries of the Rishis of the pre-Mahabharat period and as much of present scientific light as possible. Single handed the work is beyond his means, as he says in his introduction, and he appeals to his fellow countrymen and all lovers of truth for assistance in getting on with his mighty task. We wish him all success, and hope the day will come when we shall see the Vedas properly annotated by some Indian pundits who shall combine a knowledge of Western science, methods and idiom with a deep insight into the real meaning of the Vedas.

LIGHT ON THE PATH.—The very beautiful edition of this book gotten out by a devoted Theosophist, met a ready sale, and the work is now in the hands of hundreds of students in this country. Some copies went to Europe, as none of the editions sold there were as well done. It is a book which might be called a test because those who take to it naturally always have some spiritual insight or leaning. This work has just been translated into French and published by Mr. F. Krishna Gaboriau.

SOLAR BIOLOGY.—"A scientific method of delineating character, diagnosing disease, etc., from date of birth," by Hiram E. Butler (1887). Esoteric Publishing Co., Boston. Illustrated. This is a book of 290 pages, with an appendix of nearly as much more giving the positions of the moon and planets from 1820 to 1900. This work is the author's idea of what true astrology is as related to character and the method of cultivating and strengthening the same. Before going to press we have not had sufficient time to master the work, and so cannot give it an extended notice; but we know that the author is sincere and has tried to lay before his readers what he believes to be true.

BAGAVAD-GITA.—A new translation of this poem, sacred in the eyes of millions in India, and highly respected by many Europeans and Americans, will be issued in Boston in a few months. It will be well printed and it is thought at a price that will make it easily obtained by all students. There is great need for such an edition.

A WOMAN IN THE CASE.—By Elliott Coues, M.D., etc., Washington, Brentano's (1887). This is an address delivered at the Annual Commencement of the National Medical College, in the Congregational Church of Washington, March 16, 1887, and has probably stirred up the Faculty of that College more than anything else that has happened to them during the last ten years. It is a plea for Theosophy and for the advancement of woman, and is written in a clear and sparkling manner. The charter of that College prohibits religious discussion, but as all the proceedings had been opened by prayers to the Christian gods, Dr. Coues took advantage of the opening to utter some wholesome truths. The Faculty refused to print any of the addresses, so Dr. Coues got out his address on his own account.

THE LOTUS—A NEW THEOSOPHICAL MAGAZINE—has been brought out at Paris, by Mr. F. Krishna Gaboriau, "under the inspiration of Mme. Blavatsky." It is full of interesting matter, and promises to be another strong warrior for the great Theosophical cause.

THE KRISHNA THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, of Philadelphia, was organized on the 21st of last month. Carl F. Redwitz is President, E. H. Sanborn, Secretary, and Swaim Stewart, Treasurer. It has begun a theosophical library and promises to do good work in the future.

THE CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE, of April 24th, has two long contributions by Indian missionaries, which state that Theosophy is dead in India, and that only a few native theosophists remain, who sadly think they have been duped. It is contrary to our usual custom to notice such things, but as there are 105 Branches of the Society in India—one of them being in the very city (Lucknow) from which the letter emanates—we are constrained to say that our respected contemporary is aiding in spreading a very thin illusion in the place of a well known matter of fact. Another fact is that instead of Theosophy being dead in India, it is the cause of Christian mission which has come to a stand-still so far as converts are concerned, while the money is yet received in large sums from Europe and America; and this statement we make after having been on the ground and knowing whereof we speak. The slanderous letter from Lucknow concludes by encouraging the faithful to continue contributions for foreign missions.

EXISTENCE OF MAHATMAS.

We have received many inquiries, growing out of the conversation on the above subject between Edwin Arnold and the High Priest of Ceylon, and therefore we select the following one, which well represents the rest, together with the answer to it:

TO JULIUS:—

Edwin Arnold, in "India Revisited," relates a conversation which took place in Ceylon between himself and one of the celebrated Buddhist pundits, or teachers of the Island, in which the pundit replies to Arnold's question—"Are there any Mahatmas or men of exalted wisdom and goodness positively known to you to be in existence?"—substantially as follows: "No. You may look for them in India, you may seek them in Thibet or in China, or in Ceylon, but you will not find them, as no such men exist."

In view of the teachings of the Theosophical Society, I cannot account for the reply of the Buddhist. Will you please enlighten me?

C. F. B.

DEAR SIR:—

In reply to your inquiry concerning the answer made to Edwin Arnold, I would say:

1st. That I do not attempt to square the Universal Truths of Theosophy by the opinions of any persons whomsoever. Either a man finds sufficient evidence of them within himself and sown broadcast through the world, or he does not. In either case he need have no concern about persons.

2d. The reply is not quite as you state it "substantially." You have not seen through it; why should Arnold have done so, then? Read it again, and remember that the Beings there spoken of are not considered "men" in the East. It also appears that Arnold does not give his question just as it was put.

3d. We have no evidence that (*a*) Arnold correctly reported the reply, or (*b*) that he correctly understood it. This last is vital. It is difficult for the Western mind to understand or accept the attitude of the East in this regard. The Hindu is backed by centuries of silence and religious mystery. Occult laws, not to be here detailed, render it inadvisable for chela, initiate or believer to talk much with general outsiders upon such subjects. To put it briefly and crudely, they would engender inimical forces uselessly.

Again, the Hindu and Buddhist alike look upon these subjects with profound veneration, and upon the foreigner with profound suspicion. He has seen his holiest beliefs idly dissected and jestingly profaned—from his point of view. He then feels that he has "cast down his pearls" and brought dishonour upon them. Hence it is his habit to make an evasive or double-edged reply; sometimes it is a denial, but couched in a *significant* tone. In nine cases out of ten he finds the querist is only actuated by surface curiosity and accepts his answer without perceiving its disguised meaning. Then he rejoices that he has not desecrated his faith or bared his soul. But the earnest inquirer either catches the hidden spirit of the answer, or persists; that man gets satisfaction. He who is not ripe for the truth would not profit by it if it were told him, but would go away and gibe at so much as he did get.

Observe that Arnold did not persist, but accepted the answer. Did he take much interest in it? Would you have been put off so briefly in his place?

In conclusion, if you will test the fact yourself, you will find that you can make such an answer on almost any subject; and few will be the persons who take the trouble to get at your real meaning; appearances satisfy most men. Finding this, you, too, will test both. "JULIUS."

But as the Buddhist priest has not himself written on this matter, it is well to hear all witnesses. In an article in the *Revue Belgique*, by the Comte Goblet D'Alviella, and quoted in *The Theosophist* for March, 1885, (vol. 6, p. 137), the Count says:

"Those Arhats or Arahats (venerable men) are found in Tibet, and Col. Olcott says that what little of real Buddhism he knows he has learned from one of them. He also says that the *High Priest Sumangala told him* that only the adepts of the secret science (*Iddividhannana*) know the true nature of *Nirvana.*"

Now as it appears from Arnold's own report neither he nor Sumangala could know this science, it must follow that only those called Mahatmas (great souls) can know the science referred to by the priest in the above quotation. Furthermore, in all parts of India Mahatmas are admitted to exist; so much so that the word has passed into common use.

Only when men shall roll up the sky like a hide, will there be an end of misery, unless God has first been known.—*Svetasvatara-Upanishad.*

OM.